



Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Thursday, March 28, 2018, 4:30 pm

Commissioners Present: Rita Church, Lainey Rappaport, Francis (Tag) Taginski, Jennifer Diaz

Staff Present: Holli Bushnell - Office Assistant, Cindi White – BPRW Director, Rich Goodwin – Director of Financial Operations, Darlene Bayko – Banking and Cash Operations Manager

Mtg. was called to order at 4:34pm by Francis (Tag) Taginski

I. Approval of Agenda

Lainey Rappaport approved the agenda, Jennifer Diaz seconded.

II. Approval of Minutes from September 20th Meeting

Taginski had emailed Holli Bushnell before the meeting with several changes to the minutes. One of these changes was in reference to something that was not discussed at the previous meeting and Bushnell did not feel comfortable adding in comments that were not accurate to the discussion. Bushnell willingly made the verbiage changes Taginski requested and Taginski agreed that the addition he requested should be left out. Rappaport moved to accept the amended minutes, Diaz seconded.

III. Old Business

A. Perpetual Care Fund – City Finance Office

This item was briefly tabled as the Rich Goodwin and Darlene Bayko had yet to arrive. The Lakeview Fence update was discussed first.

Upon their arrival, Bayko was happy to report that the revenue for FY18 was higher than anticipated. She explained the process of holding funds in a separate cemetery deposit account as they come in and then transferring the moneys into investments such as Treasury Bills (T-Bills) once enough money has accrued.

Goodwin explained that, as of 90 days ago, the city has a new investment policy which allows greater flexibility in the kinds of investments made and could possibly double the returns on investments. The finance office is in the process of putting together an RFP to bring in a new entity to handle investments on the city's behalf.

Currently, the cemetery has about \$1.247 million in our perpetual care fund. Bayko explained that most if not all of that money is held in CDs for \$250,000 each. One of those CDs recently matured and Bayko hopes to move that money into a municipal bond with a return rate of 2.29% (significantly higher than our previous investments). The state of Vermont allows for a variety of investments with higher returns and only slightly higher risk.



The cemetery uses the interest from the Perpetual Care Fund investments as part of the operating budget. Our money is transferred from our accounts to the overall Parks budget, but it is allocated specifically towards cemetery operations and projects. Only the cemetery department can utilize these funds, they are not used for other BPRW needs. The Perpetual Care Fund itself is like an endowment. The principal cannot be touched, but it can be invested. The cemetery funds are not part of an inter-fund cash account. We have our own brokerage and deposit accounts.

As with any business, there are good years and bad years. FY18 was a good year for the cemetery. Unfortunately, there is not a set amount of money we can count on for every year, but, if we have a good year and do not need all the interest for operational costs we can reallocate the funds we don't use in an effort to build more interest. Those funds can also be set aside and earmarked for specific projects. The good news is that, while bonds are subject to the fluctuations of the market, the city's investment policy is designed to keep us from losing money. We primarily invest in municipal bonds and t-bills which are both solid fixed income investments with relatively low risk.

Taginski asked for an explanation of how large bonds and bills fit into the Perpetual Care Fund total. Bayko explained that all of the Perpetual Care Fund is currently invested in CDs that mature at different times. Ideally, she's hoping to synchronize the maturation of our funds so that we can invest in different things and in different quantities. Now when a CD matures, as one just did, she is making shorter term investments. This is in hopes of having more funds available to reinvest when the city's investment RFP takes effect.

The question of holding interest over for several years might help the cemetery pay for larger projects was broached. This is a possibility, but if those funds are reinvested we may have to pay a penalty to take them when we want them. That said, interest money can sit in our money market account, accruing little but available for when we need it.

The finance team confirmed that they will send the commission quarterly statements which will be a tremendous help in the commission's planning process. Currently, there are several investments set to mature around 6/30. The commission should discuss what they would like to do with the incoming funds in mid-June and let the finance team know by 6/30. Investments will be made again in July. The commission asked to meet again with the finance team in mid-July to discuss what investments are available, when our CDs mature, and decide what to do with new quarterly report information.

Overall, the change in the city's investment policy has been positive and will most likely bring more funds into the cemetery.

B. Lakeview Fence Update/Bids

Cindi Wight reports that Max Madalinski is now heading up the project and is actively looking for bidders. Wight asked for clarification on whether the commission was comfortable looking for bids on both a solid steel and an aluminum fence. The commission confirmed that they would like to see bids for both materials.



C. Section 6 RFP

Wight, Bushnell, Deryk Roach, and Jeff Shedd met to discuss major concerns Shedd has concerning the future of section 6. The area has an extremely high water table or possibly an underground spring. This causes stones to heave and sink and graves to fill with water to the point of having coffins floating during burials. Essentially, without serious work on drainage section 6 is not appropriate for burials.

Knowing there is a need for more burial space, Shedd proposed a new area for development to the west of sections 5 and 6. This area, now known as section 8, has ideal soil conditions and no water issues. It would be simple to develop and Shedd has asked for the opportunity to design the space.

While the commission was frustrated that the work they had put into the development of section 6 was for naught they agreed that section 8 would be the better area for immediate development. The hope is that, with time, research, and a great deal of work, section 6 could be developed in the future. That said, they would be more comfortable having a landscape architect design section 8. Wight believes Shedd should be given an opportunity to design the area, but will look into adding a landscape architect to the project if need be.

D. Lakeview office building repair update

No updates were available.

E. Greenmount Road Repair

The cemetery department specifically and BPRW in general do not intend to fully repair the roads at Greenmount. The belief is that a smoother, more easily accessible road will encourage people to drive through the cemetery at unsafe speeds, causing damage to the stones and land. Taginski presented 2 proposals, one for a full repair of the loop roads (\$12,000) and one for the partial repair (\$5,500). Work for the partial repair would only take about a day and a half. Wight asked that the commission wait until after July 1 to decide if the Greenmount Road repair is really a project we want to pursue. Thanks to the finance team we believe there will be left over funds to work with, but we won't know exactly what moneys are available until the end of the current fiscal year.

F. Grave GPS Project

Both Taginski and Bushnell have explored various GPS/GIS options for grave mapping. While some options are extremely expensive and far out of any possible budget, the most promising option is to work with Pontem, the cemetery management software we already use. Bushnell will forward the Pontem proposal to Pat Schmitz and will work with IT to see what are the most appropriate options and when purchase might be made.

IV. New Business

There were no new business items at this time.

V. Superintendent and Office Assistant Report



In reference to issues with the chapel that were discussed at the last meeting, Bushnell commented that there is a cemetery rule that prevents the use of a port-o-john on cemetery property. Generally speaking, the commission was in favor of changing this rule and allowing port-o-johns to be discretely placed for chapel and other events. Rita Church moved to allow port-o-johns at the cemetery, Diaz seconded. The commission approves the future use of port-o-johns. Bushnell will contact Roach for rentals when the need arises.

Church asked Bushnell if she was aware if there was still a section available at Lakeview for stillborn or infant burials. UVM had previously purchased a lot for this, but it is now full. Bushnell will contact UVM in regards to possibly purchasing a new area for infants and stillborns. She will also try to determine what happened to the memorial service that UVM used to hold once a year.

VI. Parks Director Items

Wight did not have items to discuss at this time.

VII. Commissioner Items

A. Friends of Lakeview Notes/Updates

Church shared that a member of the FOL feels that our signage is unfriendly. It appears to be a list of rules, things that visitors are not allowed to do, instead of something that is both informational and welcoming. She also mentioned that the word “picnicking” is misspelled on the signs. This brought up the age old question of whether the city cemeteries can be defined as parks (and what constitutes a park) and who decides what the rules are for the cemeteries. Wight will look into who is the ultimate arbiter for the cemeteries.

Church also asked if the commission would authorize the reimbursement of a book purchase for the Lakeview library. Taginski moved to authorize. Diaz seconded. All were in favor.

Diaz updated the commission on her work contacting the historical preservation department at UVM and the possibility of using community service from students at BHS. This time of year is difficult as students are graduating and teachers and professors are looking towards professional development. She will revisit this in the late summer or early fall, but both options look promising. She also will continue to look into working with a friend whose expertise is in fundraising. Once the commission has a clear project they would like to fundraise for she believes she will be able to bring her friend on board. Again, this may not be possible until the fall.

VIII. Public Comments

No public comments were made at this time.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 6:50pm.

The next commission meeting is scheduled for 6/27 at 4:30pm and will be held at the Lakeview Office.

